

THE VALUE OF TEAM WORK: BY MANAGER JOHN M'GRAW

Team work on the diamond is nothing but a combination of knowledge and ability. Its value cannot be estimated in figures. With it we have everything—without it, nothing.

One reason team work is hard to attain is because it requires both of the necessities enumerated. Either will not do. Any number of players possess physical ability, but through inexperience are lacking in knowledge of the game's fine points. If told to make a play they execute it beautifully, but they do not possess that initiative which is shown by unhesitating execution. Plays arise that call for instinctive action, which comes only from experience.

It is hard to say which is the most valuable—physical ability or knowledge. The man with ability has the best chance, as he can acquire the knowledge; if he is a thinker, but the veteran with the knowledge has little chance to develop ability that is lacking. His day is gone.

Many big leaguers are retained because of the knowledge they possess. They may not be as fast as some of the youngsters, but they can direct plays in a way that would not occur to less experienced men.

To illustrate this I mention the case of Harry Steinfeldt, the Cub third baseman. Harry may not be as fast as he was ten years ago, but Manager Chance will go a long way before he can get a man who understands the game's fine points as well as Steinfeldt. With him on third the infield has confidence that a play in his territory will be made as it should be. They know he will do the right thing at the right time, and will assist in carrying out any play that may be started across the diamond. An inexperienced player on third would cause so much anxiety that the effectiveness of the whole machine would be impaired.

Teamwork in baseball is the same as teamwork in any other business. What corporation could succeed unless its men understood each other and worked together?

One individual star could not run a corporation smoothly any more than any one great player could win a pennant for his team.

Teamwork is not necessarily the result of prearranged plans, as many baseball lovers seem to think. Real teamwork is a combination of quick thinking and execution. In a limited time such as a play on the diamond occurs in, the men must think together, each knowing what he must do and what his fellow will do to bring about the desired result. When every man knows his mates will think as fast as he does and execute his work exactly right, we have teamwork.

Say the pitcher is to pitch a fast ball outside the plate to a left-handed batter to make him hit to left field; if the manager signals the shortstop to move toward third and play deep to stop a



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ball hit in his direction, it is not teamwork. It is one-man work. On the other hand, if the shortstop appreciates the situation, gets the catcher's signal, and then moves to the proper position, it is teamwork.

Another instance frequently occurring:

The team in the field is two runs ahead and there is a runner on base. If the outfielders have had experience they would at once move back and play a deep field. They would realize that a single could score only one run under any circumstances, and would play it safe and be ready to hold a hit to a single.

Should they play too close and attempt to catch a line drive there would be a chance for the ball to get by for two or possibly three bases, breaking up the game. If a manager had to direct outfielders in this respect it would not be teamwork. If the players took the action of their own initiative it would be teamwork.

The idea that a series of signals precede every bit of teamwork is erroneous. Without knowledge, based on experience and physical ability, no amount of signaling could make a player do the proper thing. On the other hand, with the knowledge and experience, he would not require the signals.

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